

Manassas, Virginia

I am a federal employee and about ready to be in real financial trouble if this situation goes on... outside of the usual payments (house, car, etc.), I have to feed my four kids, wife and pets.

First, we are not careless; we have paid for college tuition (VA prepaid program) for years for all four kids instead of putting the money away and simply do not have savings to help in this situation. Also, this is the DC area and it is expensive to live here... not to mention my wife works to take care of our home.

We have already been punished by this situation; we had to entirely give up our Christmas (no one bought presents, and we canceled our Christmas dinner with family to conserve resources) and I had to look at my kids and ask that they hold their money so we could buy food if this shutdown continued. You have no idea how humiliating and shameful it was to make that call; but we clearly made the right, if painful and punitive, one. However, it only gives us one more trip to get groceries and then we are out of food.

Don't get me wrong, as a federal employee it should be expected that there will be times like these; but they should not drag on to the point of making workers suffer. I have lived with honor and distinction in doing my duties (from work during the events of September 11th, and multiple moments of crisis for over 30 years) and I work hard at my job; so please, out of honor, don't let the situation get worse and make my family suffer further.

On a fascinating side note, to make matters worse, I can't even get a waiter's job if I tried; one manager told me he would not hire me as he would just have to replace me soon. That was a bit of a shock and a real dumbfounded moment... and while on the side, no; my family cannot help us and yes, we will have to try some sort of social services somehow; but doubt it will be processed quickly.

Please don't misunderstand; this is not a political statement (but will admit that I am not in favor of a fence with the neighbors; and the maintenance costs over time gives me pause... and, outside of the musings of genetic paranoia, my opinion is that the real criminals will simply find a way around it without the Civil Air Patrol extensively working the coastlines again). Nor is this some kind of pressure tactic; I can see that my family is on the threshold of a lot of suffering and we don't deserve to bear the brunt of this punishment any further.

Bottom line; thank you for your consideration, but please work with your colleagues to put my co-workers and I back to work taking care of the American people and let me also resume taking good care of my family.

Great Falls, Virginia

I am the CEO of a small business in Virginia which is 100% focused on federal contracts. After two weeks of shutdown and no end in sight, we are nearing a point where we are losing revenue (because our people can't work), invoices are not getting paid by the Government and we are facing a dire cash flow situation. This will affect our ability to make payroll needing to borrow monies at higher interest rates and increase the perils of shutting down our business. Many of our furloughed employees are having a tough time paying bills and making ends meet. Some of them are contemplating a private sector career, leading to the loss of valuable talent for the government.

I am writing to request that you and the rest of the elected officials in Congress along with the executive branch work together, re-open the government and pass a budget.

As you may be aware, there are a lot more federal contractors running the government than federal employees. After the government re-opens, when the government authorizes back pay for federal employees, I would like to request that you do the same for federal contractors as well.

Fairfax, Virginia

I called your office this morning and had a heartfelt conversation with one of your interns or employees. I should have taken her name as I would like to thank her for her compassion.

I called to say that I am a constituent proud to have voted for you. I am a furloughed government contractor. I work on a contract for the FAA. We perform IT security assessments on FAA systems. It's important work but not understandably essential. It is just staggering to think about how much of our work at this one line of business is not getting done right now. It will be so hard to catch up. We have lost so much mental capital on the assessments we were working on at the time of our stop work order. The agency we support is just a tiny fraction of all the agencies affected. It feels impossible to estimate the impact of this shutdown.

I am the sole provider for my family. I'm burning through PTO right now. I was lucky; I carried over 80 hours into 2019. My small company says it'll let me and my team go 6 days negative on PTO. It won't say how long it can stay solvent. It won't say how long it will pay our benefits. It finally, today, told us that if we sign up for unemployment compensation we will automatically lose our company-supplied health and dental benefits. We will also stop accruing PTO. So most of us will probably go uncompensated for at least another week or so before we apply for unemployment.

We don't expect to get back pay like our FAA counterparts (although I understand their back pay is also not assured). We can't bill for work we don't do and we are not on one of those very rare contracts that include riders to give contract employees back pay in the event of a shutdown.

Two of my ten team members have burned the last of their PTO including the extra days. They are now on uncompensated leave. It took me a long time to build my small team. I expect to lose my top performers as my people scramble to look for other work in order to pay their bills. I am actively and aggressively looking and will probably be happy with a lower paying job just to get by.

I do not support the wall, mostly for environmental reasons. Even if I lose my house I do not support the wall. But I am also very scared and concerned about how long it will take me to either find another job or get back to work. I certainly can't just enjoy this forced PTO as I cannot spend any money. I have had to cancel vacation plans. I am very lucky in that I have fully financed our youngest's college 529 savings plan. My cousin's husband is coast guard. He's working without pay, a situation far more insulting and horrible than mine although now I worry that he might never be paid for work he was forced to do.

Thank you for your continued fight to get me and my colleagues back to work. I appreciate your common-sense approach.

Washington, DC

I work for GSA and I have been furloughed. My bills are due especially my house and car payment. However, the most pressing issue is that I have been diagnosed with breast cancer. My health care provider is Kaiser Permanente and I have to pay for the health care premium out of my pay check. I am worried that my health care provider will not provide service for me because I have not paid my insurance. I know that the President of the United States wants to build a wall but is a wall more important than our lives? How are we to survive from this situation. I hope that you will continue to work with Nancy Pelosi and others in Congress to end this government shutdown.

Washington, DC

I am writing in regards to the current government shutdown and to remind you real lives and homes are being affected. My husband is a prosecutor for the DOJ and is deemed essential but as with every other employee effected by the shutdown, not getting paid. We have lived in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for eight years and have two young children, ages 2 and 4. Because of the prolonged duration of the shutdown, after this week will be no longer to be able to pay our mortgage, child care costs and living expenses in a timely and responsible manner. I understand President Trump is acting like an oversized, spoiled child in regards to his inconsiderate and selfish demands on border protection but my husband and I want to remind you and your peers real lives are being affected and it's causing hardship on our personal and financial lives. We encourage you to continue to fight for what is right but please do so in a timely manner.

Springfield, Virginia

I am a foreign service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development and am assigned to [REDACTED] with my family. I am an excepted employee and am working without pay. As we live overseas, I cannot work outside my official position without permission from the Ambassador. In addition, opportunities to earn additional income in a developing country are few and far between. Some of my colleagues are borrowing against their retirement accounts, trying to negotiate extensions on bills, and are increasingly worried about how they will make it while being overseas without any other options for earning pay. I am increasingly worried about what my family and I will do if this continues as I am the primary income earner for our family. Job opportunities for my spouse overseas are limited and he earns a small amount of income through doing carpentry and metal working for Embassy families. Likely many of those families will delay or cancel jobs due to lack of pay themselves.

Alexandria, Virginia

I just retired from the military 1 January after serving almost 26 years and was supposed to start employment with a DHS agency the first week of January, but my onboarding has been put on hold until the end of the shutdown. I did everything right in preparation for my transition from the military, but now I'm unemployed and uncertain how this shutdown may affect my future; I won't get back pay.

Mount Vernon, Virginia

My husband and I are both furloughed Coast Guard civilians. We have two children in college. We don't know when we will get another paycheck. I have applied for unemployment through DC and have yet to hear anything back from their office. We are frustrated and can only survive for so long on our savings and his military retirement income.

San Jose, California

Rep. Lofgren received a call from a furloughed IRS employee who is behind on her bills and rent and trying to file for Unemployment with the state of California. So far she was only able to secure around \$200 in General Assistance and Food Stamps for next month. She might lose her belongings that are in storage because she is unable to make payments to the storage company, and her belongings might be sold off if she cannot come up with the payment. Her bank account is currently overdrawn after the Department of Labor took out an overpayment that they recover from her on a monthly basis; she thought that they might not do that given the shutdown.

San Jose, California

A Vietnam War veteran says that his DD-214 reflects a Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam, which he never actually received. Our inquiry for his records and medal is going unaddressed by NARA because it is closed due to lack of appropriations.

Huntington Beach, California

A Federal Investigator at HUD recently moved to California's 48th district with her husband and 3-year-old son. She and her family purchased a home in the district with the last of their savings. She has been furloughed without pay; this past winter, her family couldn't afford Christmas gifts in order to pay their bills. 27 days into the shutdown, their funds are running low. She and her husband are struggling to support their family, pay off their student debt, and stay afloat without certainty of upcoming pay. She is unable to take a new job without ruining her current career, but her family needs both the income of her and her husband in order to get by. She and her family have lost the security they worked hard for and been robbed of their American dream.

Lithonia, Georgia

I am a Service Coordinator in a retirement community in Lithonia, GA and the HUD funding that we receive for operations of our property has been cut due to the shutdown that we are experiencing. Many of our elderly residents are in jeopardy of not receiving their much-needed food stamps if the government shutdown does not end by the end of January 2019. These necessary funds for food are for basic survival due to their low incomes.

So many of our other employees with the airlines (TSA) and contractual employees are in jeopardy of losing their homes and livelihoods due to not getting paid. Most of us are just a paycheck or two away from becoming homeless if we do not receive our pay.

I beg of you to assist us in whatever needs to be done to end this shutdown and restore our government to somewhat of a normal state.

Lithonia, Georgia

I am writing to express my concern with demands to return nearly 40k furloughed IRS employees back to work without any clear path for compensation. A significant number of persons returning to work are our frontline employees who critically need and deserve pay for the work currently being done as well as preparatory work to begin Filing Season. We are all anxious to return to work and fulfill our mission and responsibilities to America's taxpayers, which includes formal implementation of Tax Reform legislation.

However, we have lost precious time as our United States leadership refuses to fully consider the morale, stress and financial strain caused to federal employees, their families, local businesses, etc. Put yourself in their/our shoes and consider how federal employees will pay for eldercare, childcare, transportation, food, tuition, rent/mortgages, and the list goes on.

This is not the time for pride, division and egotistical behavior. This is the right time for unity, peace and collaboration. In this manner, we all win.

Chicago, Illinois

It is with much frustration and heartbreak that I write to you this letter to urge you to continue efforts to end the government shutdown and its impact on working class public employees such as myself.

As you know the EPA continued open past the December 21, 2018 date using its funding through December 28. Coincidentally, December 28 was my first day of deployment to the Camp Fire Disaster in Paradise and Butte County, California where I served as public information officer at EPA's mission until last week, since I am part of the EPA Emergency Response Corps. EPA staff and contractors deployed at the incident from throughout the country work 12-hour days or longer 7 days a week – including holidays – to support FEMA's mission assignment to the EPA to remove and dispose of household hazardous waste from the over 13,500 properties affected by the fire. In support of that mission, I interacted with the public and the press to provide up-to-date information on the assignment. Lodging for EPA incident workers is less than desirable and commutes are long – since we couldn't stay in Chico, CA where lodging preference is rightfully given to fire victims.

The devotion of EPA colleagues from Region 9 and other parts of the country to this mission is inspiring and energizing. It is even more remarkable when you consider the stress of the government shutdown on all of us at the incident. In my case, it's not only not getting paid my salary, but also the inability to process reimbursement for the travel expenses I incurred to do this work for fellow Americans affected by the wildfire tragedy. \$1036 is due to me for ground transportation, meals and incidentals; and \$2682 is due on my government travel credit card. I was told that both amounts will remain unpaid until the shutdown ends. The immediate financial burden on me, beyond the payment due on credit cards for government work travel, includes the due payments on mortgage, utilities, real estate taxes, food, medicine and recent holiday purchases and donations.

Although I'm back from the California deployment, I'm not at work today. I am unable to attend to Americans in Region 5 struggling with the impact of soil, water and air pollution in their communities. As a community involvement coordinator in EPA's Region 5, I provide outreach and information to environmental justice communities – among others – near Superfund cleanups. This includes the Great Lakes, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Normally, my workload is sufficient to keep me busy many hours beyond my regular work hours, which many times I am happy to offer because I love to support communities victimized by the legacy of industrial pollution. But instead, I'm asked to not show up to work while the White House argues about a made-up crisis at the southern border.

Congresswoman Schakowsky, I gladly took a pay cut of 20K to come to work for the federal government in 2010 as I understood that I would be able to progress through the federal employment step and grade system. However, that same year a pay freeze was imposed on government workers to support the ill-conceived sequestration that kicked in in 2013. And now in 2019, I can't even report to the job I was hired to do.

I have had many employers in my work-life from institutions of higher learning such as Loyola University Chicago to private contractors for the Chicago Housing Authority. Never have I experienced the utter disregard and insulting treatment I feel from my employer, the

Government of the United States of America, and this current administration in particular. I am happy that many other co-workers throughout the federal government work for agencies that have been fully funded and are therefore not being furloughed. It pains me terribly that no similar consideration is given to those of us who are charged with caring for human health and the environment of our great nation.

Mountain View, California

I am a government contractor at NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, CA. The government shutdown has me sending 150 of my employees home who will not be paid during the closing of Ames. Our contract, and many other contracts with NASA, have a clause embedded in them that prohibits the government from reimbursing contractors while we are denied access to NASA facilities. My employees are using vacation to cover their costs, but many will run out of vacation very quickly. There are real impacts to important missions, such as NASA's Space Launch System (SLS), as well as ongoing work at Ames on the Orion capsule. The shutdown is also impacting classified testing at Ames. That work is critical to our national security. I implore you to do your duty, end the government shutdown, and get our unpaid employees back to work as soon as possible.

Aldie, Virginia

I am writing today to urge Congress to figure out a way to end this Government shutdown. Today, I had to withdraw my daughter from her elementary school aftercare, and although I told them I was a furloughed Federal employee, they charged me a \$15 administrative fee. This is a County Government program - ridiculous. Soon, I'll be having similar conversations with other debtors/companies that I pay on a monthly basis. We are scared and concerned for our families' livelihoods.

Aldie, Virginia

I want to start by saying thank you to you and all members in the House that are fighting for all federal employees in this tumultuous time. I live in Loudoun County and I am one of the many federal employees strongly impacted by this government shutdown. I have worked under the U.S. Department of the Interior since 2007. My story is probably nothing unlike you have already heard before as a lot of people are struggling now to make ends meet. I feel I am one of the fortunate ones as I have a wife that works full-time and we are still able to pay several bills through mid-February and keep our 6-year-old son in Catholic school. However, make no mistake that the financial difficulties that this shutdown has presented will catch up to our family. Even if this shutdown ends within the next two weeks (today is 1/15/19) I will have gone two pay periods with 0.00 net pay. My wife cannot afford to pay our mortgage or our two car loans as her pay goes to minor bills and all groceries. If this shutdown lasts until the end of January, we will have to take our 2-year-old daughter out of daycare just to pay our February mortgage. Our remaining bills to the beginning of March will have to be paid with the last amount of money I have in savings. (As obviously even if Government was re-opened in February, the financial burden of March's bills will be severely impacted.) I think it's important for Congress to realize that us federal employees are indeed being held hostage. I have been designated as a temporary essential employee. So not only does that mean I am working without pay, it also means that I cannot apply for unemployment benefits. And since I am considered a full-time federal employee I also cannot apply for any other full-time positions in the private sector. Any part-time work I might find will not pay enough. (I'm better off keeping my daughter at home with me saving our family \$2k a month in day care.) Now I know that my story is not the most intriguing or even the most devastating. I do feel extremely bad for those who are in more dire straits than we are. I just felt it was important to let you know and add another email on top of your growing stack to help show how impactful this shutdown is and badly it needs to end. If this email helps you in some way understand more of the impact, then I feel I did some service. I understand there are a lot of players at work here and that you are doing everything you can in representing not just your district but all federal employees. Again I thank you. Keep fighting for us!

Fairfax, Virginia

I called to say that I am a constituent proud to have voted for you. I am a furloughed government contractor. I work on a contract for the FAA. We perform IT security assessments on FAA systems. It's important work but not understably not "essential. It is just staggering to think about how much of our work at this one line of business is not getting done right now. It will be so hard to catch up. We have lost so much mental capital on the assessments we were working on at the time of our stop work order. The agency we support is just a tiny fraction of all the agencies affected. It feels impossible to estimate the impact of this shutdown.

I am the sole provider for my family. I'm burning through PTO right now. I was lucky; I carried over 80 hours into 2019. My small company says it'll let me and my team go 6 days negative on PTO. It won't say how long it can stay solvent. It won't say how long it will pay our benefits. It finally, today, told us that if we sign up for unemployment compensation we will automatically lose our company-supplied health and dental benefits. We will also stop accruing PTO. So most of us will probably go uncompensated for at least another week or so before we apply for unemployment.

We don't expect to get back pay like our FAA counterparts (although I understand their back pay is also not assured). We can't bill for work we don't do and we are not on one of those very rare contracts that include riders to give contract employees back pay in the event of a shutdown.

Two of my ten team members have burned the last of their PTO including the extra days. They are now on uncompensated leave. It took me a long time to build my small team. I expect to lose my top performers as my people scramble to look for other work in order to pay their bills. I am actively and aggressively looking and will probably be happy with a lower paying job just to get by.

I do not support the wall, mostly for environmental reasons. Even if I lose my house I do not support the wall. But I am also very scared and concerned about how long it will take me to either find another job or get back to work. I certainly can't just enjoy this forced PTO as I cannot spend any money. I have had to cancel vacation plans. I am very lucky in that I have fully financed our youngest's college 529 savings plan. My cousin's husband is coast guard. He's working without pay, a situation far more insulting and horrible than mine although now I worry that he might never be paid for work he was forced to do.

Thank you for your continued fight to get me and my colleagues back to work. I appreciate your common sense approach.

Haymarket, Virginia

I am an air traffic controller who lives in your district. I want to thank you for voting in favor of H.R. 267 which provides funding for federal agencies affected by the recent shutdown, including the Department of Transportation in which I work.

As you are aware, my profession is one that is considered essential which requires me to go to work while not getting paid. As you are also aware, working while not knowing when I, or for that matter any controller will receive a paycheck introduces unneeded stress and emotion into a line of work that requires the utmost attention. The controller workforce wants this shutdown to end so that we can resume our normal lives and know with certainty when the next paycheck will come.

In closing, I want to thank you again for voting in favor of H.R. 267. However, I also want to ask that you keep fighting for the furloughed federal workers and vote in favor of measures that end this shutdown. I believe you are already aware of how critical my profession as an air traffic controller is, but if you wanted to make a visit and witness firsthand how important this profession is, do not hesitate to reply to this email and I can help organize a time for you to visit. Thank you again for what you have done so far and please Stop The Shutdown Today.

Manassas Park, Virginia

My husband has Cancer and has gone thru treatment including chemo. He did not work during chemo and has not yet returned to work. Our income has been reduced due to his illness. I am a federal worker and I have no idea when I will get paid. I have had a tremendous amount of stress due to my husband's cancer, treatment and reduced income. Now we have no income. Please do something.

Centreville, Virginia

I am a federal employee, working for the Department of the Interior. As a result of the shutdown, I have been furloughed. I am begging you to get your fellow Democrats as well as the Republicans to do whatever is necessary to stop this shutdown. I cannot go much longer without a paycheck. Along with the normal household bills, I also have my father, who has Alzheimer's, and my mother, who has emphysema and heart issues, living with me. The continuation of this shutdown will put their health in jeopardy if I am not able to pay my bills. While I don't agree with including the money Trump wants for his border wall, something has got to give. It is unfair to the people who have decided to serve their country as federal employees to hold back their pay for something that does not have anything to do with them. This should not be a bargaining chip. My story is just one of thousands out there who are in the same boat, or worse. Please, work with the Republicans and do whatever is necessary to end this shutdown.

Frederick, Maryland

I have been an Air traffic controller for 35 years. I'm an Army veteran and have a wife and 3 kids. I love my job and had planned to continue until they force me out in 22 months.

Throughout my career I have been saving money to put my kids through college. My eldest is finishing her second year at Frederick Community College and plans on going to Towson next year. My middle daughter is starting at Salisbury next year. We have always lived paycheck to paycheck and the uncertainty and thinking about how long this could drag on is causing me a ton of worry. If the shutdown goes on much longer I will be forced to take money out of my kids' college funds and my retirement savings. That comes with penalties that I'll never get back. I want this shutdown to end yesterday, but equally important to me, is Dems should not cave on this issue. I should not be used as a pawn in an unrelated matter. This is not my first shutdown but this one feels different than the others. Congress and the President should never use hard working civil servants as pawns in their political battles.

Bethesda, Maryland

I'm an aviation hazmat safety specialist and support the FAA national hazmat inspection safety program and the FAA federal agents that inspect aircraft (currently not out on furlough but working with no pay).

My wife who's employed at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland and I are currently furloughed without pay. We had hoped to retire from federal service this year but that is in question as we are starting to deplete our savings and rainy-day fund. With this president and the Republican party and frankly the attitude of disparagement they've shown all federal workers over the past decade or more, both my wife and I have kept a separate rainy-day fund in our personal budgets. Unfortunately, if the shutdown continues we will be forced to look for alternative options (loans/credit cards etc.) to make ends meet. Our situation is also unique in that our current landlord in Bethesda is also a Federal employee (also furloughed without pay from EPA). We have our fingers crossed that a miracle will happen but with the current Republican Senate control and rhetoric, we are very concerned. Lastly, we wanted to clearly say we are not in favor whatsoever of President Trump's and Mitch McConnell's shutdown, wall, and using federal employees and agencies as pawns.

Rockville, Maryland

My husband works for the EPA. Our family has been on his health insurance through the government since 2006. In 2013 at the age of 30 and with three children under the age of 5, I was diagnosed with stage 3 brain cancer. I was able to have fantastic health care and can happily claim today that I have no evidence of that disease. However, I continue to be monitored several times a year by 3 different specialized medical providers as well as my primary care physician. If he were forced to leave from any reduction of force, we would not have the great health insurance that saved my life. I have a significant pre-existing condition and worry for not only my health but the financial security of our family.

Silver Spring, Maryland

I work as a federal contractor, and as of December 26, 2018, I have been effectively furloughed. It is now January 12, 2019 and there is no indication that the shutdown will end any time soon.

As contractors we are hired to fill gaps in the Federal Agencies that we support, many of which are specialized, technical, and are necessary to modernize and support integral services needed to fulfill our Agency's mission. For all intents and purposes, we are the gears that help Federal Agencies run day-to-day. I'm proud to be able to contribute in whatever small way I can to help my Agency, and I greatly enjoy working together with my federal colleagues. However, contractors are effectively labeled as second-class citizens in the eyes of our Federal Government. Unlike our federal peers, we do not receive backpay for the shutdown and are not afforded the same protections that would help alleviate our current financial situations.

No one is willing to hire a temporary contract worker, and why would they? Why expend the time and resources to onboard furloughed contractors, just to have them leave and return to their obligated work once the government re-opens. We are stuck between a rock and a hard place. As federal contractors, we are impacted the most by this shutdown, and the longer.

Silver Spring, Maryland

I came to the D.C. area for my dream job doing public relations for a small, independent federal agency last March. Just three months ago, I bought a wonderful condo in downtown Silver Spring. It is the first home I've purchased on my own and I'm 55. Now, this senseless and cruel shutdown has put my home in jeopardy. I could lose everything I have worked so hard for. I don't want to sit around-I want to work. I believe strongly in government service. I cried tears of joy as I proudly took the oath when I was hired. I can't understand why lawmakers think it's okay to play political games with our lives. I don't know how they can go about their lives in good conscience while we are suffering. Please do what's right and end this shutdown now.

White River Junction, Vermont

My spouse and I are both employees of the National Park Service in Vermont. We have both been furloughed since the shutdown began on December 22nd. We are very fortunate to have savings to lean on for this first missed paycheck--like most Vermonters we have a mortgage, oil, groceries etc. to pay for. Additionally, we employ a nanny to help us care for our 3 young boys while we are at work. She is also a Vermonter. I do not want to furlough her as well (she is a single mother), so I have had her continue to work so that she, too does not have to miss a paycheck. However, if this goes on much longer we will have no choice but to ask her to stop work until we can earn our paychecks again. As public servants, this shutdown is extremely demoralizing and makes us feel like pawns in a game to our President. I hope that you and your fellow congressmen and women can push forward successful legislation that will put us back to work preserving our nation's natural and cultural resources. Thank you for listening.

Essex Junction, Vermont

I'm a meteorologist at the National Weather Service weather forecast office located at BTV. All but 1 employee at our office has to work thru the shutdown. Our office is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year with at least 2 meteorologists working at all times. We worked Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's without knowing when our next pay will arrive. We are a very dedicated group of individuals who are passionate about advancing science in our field, but we are feeling very demoralized and unappreciated. We continue to issue timely forecasts and warnings, protecting life and property across the North Country and also supporting our Emergency Management, aviation, and other partners. Two of our meteorologists were unable to attend and present at the American Meteorological Society National conference in Phoenix earlier this month. Two other meteorologists had a week of training canceled next week. This unnecessary government shutdown has nothing to do with us. Some of us are young professionals just starting out, without a lot of savings, paying student loans after receiving bachelor's and master's degrees. Some of us are the only source of income for our young families. Some of us are veterans. As you know, we've been waiting for a new locality pay, and now we have no pay at all. Our office is already short staffed with 19 people doing the work of 23 people, we have not been fully staffed since September 2012. Now we're facing work without pay, I worry for my colleagues' health, physical and mental. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you about this, and I hope that you will do whatever you can to end this shutdown.

Denver, Colorado

I am a Federal employee who submitted my retirement paperwork in November with a retirement date of 12-31-18. My agency (CPSC) is one of the ones that is unfunded and on furlough. I had anticipated a short time where I would need to have some money saved to help get through the waiting period before my pension was coming in, but now I am caught in the limbo of this political mess. I haven't explored unemployment benefits because I don't think I am really unemployed after only missing 6 days of pay, but I'm just as broke as the folks that were still planning to work in 2019. I see many offers of help for unemployed Feds, but no mention of those of us that are "un-retired" feds. I do not support Mr. Trump's monument to his ego and bigotry and do not want any funding for this stain on our country. We need to manage immigration, but at this point there has been so much cruelty done to these people seeking a new start in life that we need to concentrate on helping them recover from the damage that has been done to them by the US government. We have true emergency needs for US Citizens in Puerto Rico, California, and other areas of the US that have been targeted by severe weather events. These need to be our first priorities for assistance before we even consider barrier projects at the border. Please work to get the government funded and running again. We have plenty of time to consider new projects after current issues have been addressed.

Littleton, Colorado

I am writing to share my concern over the continued partial government shutdown. My husband is a DoI employee and is considered nonessential. Our family depends on my husband's income to be able to afford to live in the Denver area. We feel as though we are being used as pawns in a ridiculous fight in which we have no say. We are very upset that our lives are in turmoil over a stupid barrier. I urge you to work to pass legislation to reopen the government and provide compensation to furloughed workers without giving in to a bully's demands. Money for security, technology, and training I'm sure would be useful for all ports of entry, but a wall is a ridiculous waste of federal tax dollars. Please do whatever it takes to end the shutdown and override vetoes if necessary. We are counting on you to speak up for us.

Denver, Colorado

I am writing to ask that you make sure we don't have a third government shutdown in 2018, and that all federal workers stay on the job in December, are paid on time, and receive a pay raise for January. I am a federal employee in your district. Federal employees work and live in every part of the country and are proud to work for the federal government. We perform a multitude of jobs, including working as scientists, accountants, engineers, inspectors, and law enforcement.

A possible third shutdown this year for parts of the federal government is making it difficult to do my job and making my family and me nervous. Federal employees are not able to perform our regular duties when agencies must instead prepare for and are uncertain whether they will be open or closed because of a lack of funding, and employees are unsure whether they are to report to work. Further, I am worried about not receiving my paycheck on time and not receiving a pay increase in January. My family and I depend on my paycheck. Like all American workers and middle-class taxpayers, federal workers are facing ever-increasing costs of living, with rising utility, food and health care bills, along with school loan and rent or mortgage obligations. Please act to ensure passage of legislation that would require that all federal employees are paid retroactively in the event of a shutdown and receive a pay increase in January.

I am also concerned about my agency not receiving the proper amount of funding for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2019. Collecting taxes, testing drugs, keeping Wall Street in line, facilitating travel and commerce at ports of entry, making food safe, working on clean water and air - all of these jobs and goals would be severely impacted by further funding cuts and a continuation of sequestration. I can say that it will not be possible to provide the services Americans rely on from their federal government if more cuts become a reality.

Please let me know that as my Member of Congress you will work to end constant CRs and shutdowns, ensure federal employees are paid on time and with a fair pay raise, and properly fund agencies so that programs your constituents rely on are not dismantled.

Denver, Colorado

I'm getting worried about my mortgage payment coming up, I barely managed to ensure my student loans are paid for this month, and now I have to worry about food and other bills. I do not support a wall! Thank you for fighting for us American federal workers!

Leominster, Massachusetts

My son he got engaged to his girlfriend of several years in October. They are relatively new residents of Worcester. He recently began working for Homeland Security (TSA) and was very excited to start his job. Unfortunately, on Christmas day, she had significant medical emergencies. He is impacted by the shutdown but working and being with his fiancé at the hospital. Can you even imagine that you are recently engaged, your fiancé almost loses her life, and you're not getting paid when you were recently so excited that you secured federal work? Per your request I am sharing their story with you. I am not sure if there is anything actionable that can be done by your office, but I appreciate even being able to share their experience. Thank you.

Phillipston, Massachusetts

I work for the IRS and am expecting to be made essential very soon and forced to work with no paycheck until the end of the shutdown. The problem is I also own a small restaurant with my wife and she usually works there, but unfortunately about a month ago she fell and broke her ankle and is unable to put any weight on it and can't walk on it therefore she is out of work so currently I am covering for her at the restaurant so we do not have to increase the payroll to pay her. That being said, if I am forced to drive the 100 miles round trip to Andover the gas cost would hurt extremely. And if I have to go to work with no paycheck in sight it's two-fold as I would have to hire someone to replace my wife at the restaurant possibly making it that we don't make any pay from there or possibly lose money. So falling behind on personal and business bills would be extremely harmful to my family financially. Any guidance you can give me will be extremely helpful.

Hardwick, Massachusetts

A constituent called and said that he is going to have to shut down his business next week because the Food Safety and Inspection Service (SFIS) division in the USDA, who approves labeling for food, is not currently approving the labels for his new slaughterhouse. When he called, there was an automated response saying the division was closed due to the government shut down. He explained that the label in question had already been approved for his other slaughterhouse, and he believed this should be a "rubber stamp" for his new location. He has already started calling producers, among others, and notified them he would likely have to shut down operations next week. I know that FDA's routine food safety inspections have stopped, but they stated that about a third of the inspections will still be conducted starting next week. However, the USDA has continued mandatory, continuous livestock slaughter inspections.

Spencer, Massachusetts

"Thank you for taking my call this morning. As requested to summarize, we are currently facing two problems as a result of the government shutdown. Both of these problems are a direct result of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) being closed. We are able to submit items to the agency, however, no personnel are available to respond and process submissions.

Forty percent of our sales annually are to our export partners in Europe and Asia. We currently have two purchase orders; however, we are unable to receive approval on them from the TTB. For every export order we receive we are required to submit a Certificate of Free Sale to the TTB. This paperwork when approved is signed, stamped and returned to us at the brewery, so that it can accompany the order when it ships. We are not able to ship export orders without an approved Certificate of Free Sale. Certificates of Free Sale for both orders were submitted on January 4, 2018. We did receive the automatic email response that they were received as usual, see the email attached. As detailed in their automatic response turnaround time for approval is ten days, which in reality is about two weeks' time. The brewery and our partners had planned for both orders to ship before the end of January; however, this no longer appears to be attainable.

The second issue we are facing as a result of the government shutdown is that we are unable to have the TTB review the labeling of a new beer we had planned to launch during the beginning of February. When a brewery develops a new product, if they plan to sell it outside of their home state they need to submit the labeling for the product to the TTB for approval through COLAs Online to ensure that it is compliant with federal label regulations. As a result of the TTB being shutdown there is no way for us to receive label approval to allow us to sell into the five states we currently have distribution in outside of Massachusetts. Furthermore, states such as Connecticut and New Hampshire require proof of TTB COLA approval before they allow breweries and distributors within the state to register that product for sale within the state. Without the TTB COLA approval we will not be able to sell our new product to our distribution partners outside of Massachusetts.

The government shutdown, especially the shutdown of the TTB, is directly harming our day to day business here. For us the bottom line is we are unable to proceed with any export shipments, which make up forty percent of our annual sales, and the planned launch of our new product outside of Massachusetts has been stopped due to the government shutdown, which will have a directly negative effect on our first quarter incomes. It is our hope that you keep us and other small businesses in mind as you work toward a resolution to reopen the government.

Waldorf, Maryland

I work for Homeland Security and this is beyond ridiculous that we are being used as pawns and it is not fair to any of us to have to suffer at the hands of those who don't want to work to get those agencies effected up and running sooner rather than later. There is nowhere for myself or most of the workers furloughed to go to provide us assistance with paying our bills.

Unemployment isn't enough for most of us to live off of. I have lived through several shutdowns in my 30 years in the government and this is the first time I fear that we don't matter and that I will lose everything I have worked so hard for all because of a wall and a President who doesn't care about anyone other than his supporters and not the American people as a whole. I need my job and my income now, not two weeks from now, not a month from now. When will the person occupying the White House stop thinking about only himself and be willing to seriously work with Congress to end this stalemate and get the government back open? Soon many of us will be homeless if nothing is done.

Ashburn, Virginia

Thank you for your service to the 10th district. I am a current resident and small business owner providing IT services to the federal government, specifically to USDA. I am writing to let you know that this shutdown is really hurting us. I think it is massive failure on part of both the congress and the president in not being able to reach a solution. We have currently been paying the employees with our reserves. Two more weeks and we will have to start laying off people. It hurts to let go of good hardworking folks who of their no fault have to bear the consequences. My request and hope in writing this letter is to push you and your co-members to find a solution to this before it sinks a lot of small businesses in your district.

Boston, Massachusetts

■■■■■, A TSA agent at Logan Airport and a single mother of three, hasn't received a paycheck and is worried about falling behind on her rent as well as daycare payments. Her payments must stay current or she risks losing her kids' spots. She said, "I don't know how I'm going to make this work. If I don't get paid, how can I afford to send my children to daycare?" Without a paycheck, her savings have been drained – with only \$400 remaining, she won't be able to cover her expenses next month. Her rent alone is \$1,500. She is applying for SNAP but if SNAP funding is depleted before the shutdown ends, she won't even have the ease of knowing her children will be fed.

Waltham, Massachusetts

██████ is an Indian citizen but has resided with legal status in the US for over 12 years, working for a child care provider based in Watertown. She and her husband and young son traveled to India in November to visit with family, and at that time they went to the U.S. Consulate in India to get their work visas stamped. Her husband's visa was issued right away, but Amanda's was subject to further review. Having still not received her visa, she remained in India with her son when her husband returned to the U.S. after the holiday to go back to work. The shutdown has delayed the processing even further, and this prolonged separation has been a significant hardship to this family, especially to the young son.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

■■■■■ runs a small business that works almost exclusively on DOD and DHS contracts. Because the company is so small, they are struggling to keep up with payroll as the funding has lapsed. They are only days away from not being able to pay their employees.